

SECRET

Historical REISER Meeting with the Grand Chef in Summer 1948

From December 1947 to mid-December 1948, REISER was in Freiburg (Breisgau) where he was being debriefed at regular intervals by the Bureau Central de Renseignements on the organization of the Rote Kapelle in France and the activity of the Comintern in France. One day, in July or August 1948, REISER had an errand to accomplish at the Freiburg railroad station, and he was standing at the gate as the international Luebeck-Copenhagen express, coming north from Basel, pulled in. This was between 1400 and 1500 hours on the day in question. As REISER was contemplating the attractions of being able to travel on such a train, a window in one of the Wagons Lit cars was lowered, and a man leaned out. REISER looked, and then stared; the man at the window was obviously the Grand Chef. The distance between the two men was about 30 meters, but the typical, stocky figure of the Grand Chef, his solid bulk, his body movements, could never be forgotten when one had been in such long contact with the man as REISER had. And REISER was convinced that the Grand Chef also noticed REISER and stared at him incredulously. He seemed to recognize REISER, lowered the window all the way, and then started to walk down the corridor. Before the Grand Chef reached the platform, however, the train pulled out and no meeting took place.

REISER naturally wondered if he could not have been mistaken, but the 'mutual recognition' seemed to rule that out. Furthermore, another incident at about the same time tended to confirm that it had been the Grand Chef travelling northward into Germany.

At the time of the above incident, a former co-worker of the Sonderkommando Rote Kapelle in Paris, Willi (Wilhelm) BERG (born 1 March 1891 in Bissellen-Gasterode, Pforta-Kriminalobersekretär in the RSHA in Berlin, presently living at Berlin NW 21, Luebockerstrasse 31) was in Uelsen in Luebeck, in a British transit camp and used by the British as an 'expert'. REISER had learned this a few weeks earlier, from a reliable friend, who had also warned REISER against taking up contact with BERG. The warning added that BERG was not approachable, and that furthermore he was awaiting the visit of 'an old acquaintance' at about that time, and did not want to be disturbed. Later, BERG would be coming to Karlsruhe, where he would be very pleased to meet REISER. To the above statements, REISER himself adds that when the Grand Chef escaped from Paris in September 1943 and fled to Switzerland, it was most probably BERG who let him slip away. Many

SECRET

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

of REISER's co-workers (including Kriminalrat KOPKEW of the RSHA) were of the opinion that the Grand Chef could only have escaped with BERG's acquiescence and assistance. REISER was of the same opinion, but was unable to prove anything against BERG. The Grand Chef had numerous, well-camouflaged contacts of long standing in Switzerland, and had even admitted some of these himself under interrogation. His last letter to the Sonderkommando Rote Kapelle (addressed to Kriminalrat FALKWILZ) had been sent from the Swiss border at the end of September 1943. It is quite definite, then, that from September 1943 on, and possibly up to 1946, the Grand Chef was in Switzerland. Now, although the REISER-Grand Chef meeting in Freiburg in 1946 was pure coincidence, it must be noted that at the very same time BERG wanted to have nothing to do with his old friends or colleagues. BERG's Ulsam, furthermore, lies on the rail route of the Lucerne-Copenhagen express. Did the Grand Chef and BERG have a meeting?

SECRET

CS 977 filed in

E

7

E

7

BEST AVAILABLE COPY